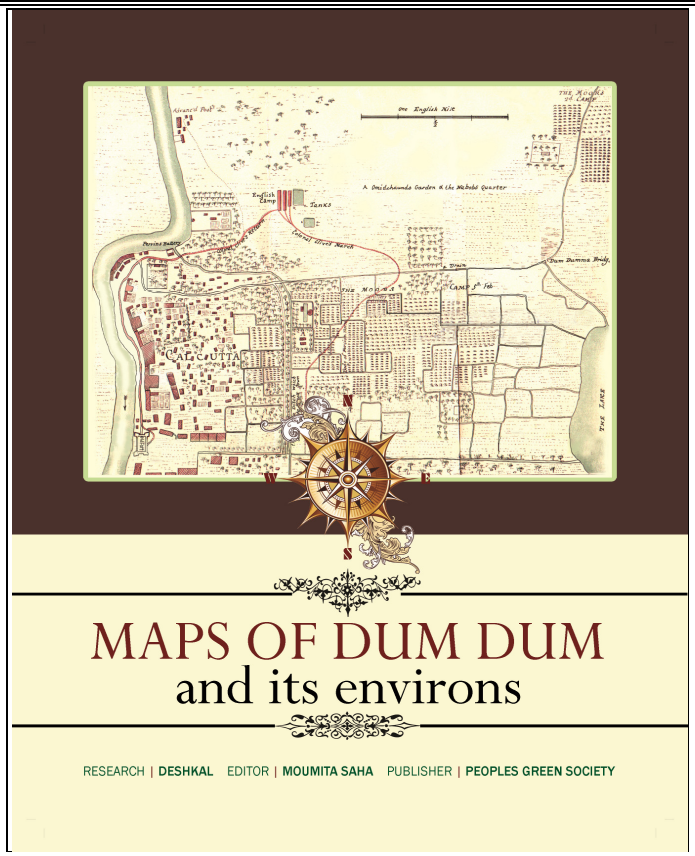

Synopsis of Book

Title : Maps of Dum Dum and its Environs
A Collection of unpublished maps : one of the oldest cantonment of British Dum Dum
Editor : Moumita Saha

Maps of Dum Dum and its Environs portrays a picture of the historical and developmental process of a forgotten city that has attracted a huge array of foreigners. The buildings, churches, monuments, canons etc located at Dum Dum and its environs are still carrying the memories of the visiting Dutch, Portuguese, British and other overseas people. This publication has a definite time frame from English colonial period to modern period. The related description stands as a sublime paean to the kind of creative integrity that has been fostered through immense research, blazed with a crystalline clarity of conviction. At the same time, one can't help but wonder at the presentation of maps which are considered to be rare, for it also brings into light the importance of statistics, cartographic documents and the vitality of facts, retrieved from archives and libraries from significant parts of the world. This mélange of interpretations and revelations have sculpted polyvalent narratives of Dum Dum's history. History lovers might also enjoy the taste of the unique combination of the same with geography. For this document will, in every way, act

as a necessary companion volume for the books of British Dum Dum and Swadeshi Dum Dum, that have been researched by Deshkal.

Preface of the book

Geographical analysis is essential and complementary part of historical investigation. This also holds for sculpting local histories. If maps are analysed scientifically, then history begins to narrate its tale spontaneously. Herein lies the importance of studying maps. If the land maps pertaining to Dumdum are arranged chronologically - the physical, administrative and socio-economic backdrop of the area become evident. The present volume, The Maps of Dumdum and its environs, aims at bringing about this synthesis between geography and history. Just as it is important to know Dumdum from maps, it is also critical to realise that Dumdum has played an historical role in cartographical endeavours.

Colonel Sir George Everest (1790-1866) as commissioned into the Royal Artillery, in 1818, he came to India and joined as surveyor of Bengal Artillery, Dumdum. He was largely responsible for completing the section of the Great Trigonometric Survey of India along the meridian arc from southern India extending north to Nepal, a distance of about 2,400 kilometres (1,500 miles). In 1865, Mount Everest, the highest peak of the world was named in his honour, by the Royal Geographical Society, London.

It is in Dumdum that Captain Ralph Smyth (?-1886), Captain of Bengal Artillery, was stationed as the Revenue Surveyor. Smith carried out a critical survey on the erstwhile district of undivided 24 Parganas. His Statistical and Geographical Report of the 24 Pergunnahs District was published in 1851. This survey report unravels various important facts about the locality. He also participated in drafting the early maps of Capital Calcutta - The City and Environs of Calcutta, including the Government Estate of Punchunnogram, 1852-56 and another was 24 Purgunnahs , 1847-52.

The eminent surveyor, lithographer, photozincographer Captain James Waterhouse (1842-1922), famous for association with the Survey of India - was also in the Bengal Artillery. While residing in Dumdum, he printed an extensively researched map named Dumdum Cantonment and Environs from which we derive a detailed knowledge of nineteenth century Dumdum.

The General Report (1937) of the Survey of India states that the aerial survey and mapping performed jointly by Royal Air Force and Indian Air Survey Company, set up its central office in Dumdum. Agents who were responsible to sell their maps across India functioned from Dumdum. It is from Dumdum that they sold the maps of 'Indian Air Survey and Transport Department'.

Just as Dumdum's history is inextricably linked with the history of India, similarly Dumdum played a memorable role in laying down the historiographic contours of the subcontinent. The Maps of Dumdum and its environs is a compiled hoard of this enduring harvest of cartographic analysis.

For more : mou.dhi08@gmail.com